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AGDA (M) (10 Aug 70) FOR OT UT 70B027

17 August 1970

**SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Col. Harold J. Jacobs,  
Defense Attache, Period Ending 30 July 1968 to 31 July 1970 (U)**

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2. Transmitted herewith is the report of Col. Harold J. Jacobs subject as above.

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## DEBRIEFING REPORT

COUNTRY : Ecuador  
REPORTED BY : Harold J. Jacobs, Col., USA, 318-14-5346  
DUTY ASSIGNMENT : Defense Attaché  
INCLUSIVE DATES : 30 July 1968 - 31 July 1970  
DATE OF REPORT : 15 July 1970  
NEW DUTY STATION: U.S. Army Audit Agency, St. Louis, Mo.

I. (CNFD) CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO INCIPIENT INSURGENCY IN ECUADOR. Although active insurgency does not exist, there are elements present which create a potential threat of such a development.

A. Political. The political structure of Ecuador is presently on a narrow base with no deep roots in the social system. Historically, politics were left to the ruling class and patterned on the Spanish heritage. Wide political excursions have been Ecuador's fate. There is, however, a growing political consciousness in the middle and lower segments of society but much is unstructured and follows the world-wide foment of anti-Establishment movement. Personal magnetism of leaders transcends party lines and platforms in many cases. Demagoguery is the rule. Since 22 June 1970, the form of government has been the dictatorship of President José María Velasco Ibarra, supported by the military. Whether benign or not, or whether he will be deposed (as has happened three times previously) remains to be seen. Velasco has abolished Congress and will rebuild the Supreme Court, has reverted to the Constitution of 1946 and has ruled by decree in attempts to achieve fiscal and economic reforms (as well as others) which he found impossible to accomplish under the previous constitution, congress and supreme court. He has not abolished political parties, although few political functions can be exercised until a plebiscite can be held to ratify the 1946 Constitution. If acceptable, the old constitution will permit election of officials, to include the head of state, in mid-1972. Assumption of supreme powers by Velasco is fraught with pitfalls leading toward insurgency. He must thread his way thru mountains of political, social and economic decisions for the next two years, any one or a series of which

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can coalesce the presently fragmented forces of occasional violence and subversion into active insurgency, probably of the urban variety. Further, alienation of students, unions and the oligarchy in face of unsolved economic problems, can topple Velasco with little notice. Stringent economic measures are essential for his survival pending anticipated 1972 inputs from the nascent petroleum industry of the Oriente and the Costa. It is doubted that he will take such measures, the principal of which may be devaluation of the sucre. As of this writing, political expectations of the majority of the people have been supplanted by economic concerns. The fall of Velasco will expose the country to several possible types of government (military, junta, triumvirate, etc.) any of which could precipitate some degree of insurgency.

B. Military. The military derives obliquely from the various national constitutions its role of guardian of the democratic processes of the country. A rare logic permits them to abstain from or participate in political pressure ploys or intervention with government processes. From an apolitical stand early in Velasco's present tenure to advising the President recently to assume extraordinary powers describes swing of the military policy. One could conclude that the application or withholding of military pressure is, de facto, political involvement. The military, by and large, have acted circumspectly in their contribution toward public order and safety, usually in close cooperation and coordination with the National Police forces. The fact that the military has usually entered into confrontations after initial efforts of police forces have been neutralized by rioting students, has escalated the degree of force required, and, therefore, has created enmity between students and the military. Although the military establishment is almost solidly behind Velasco, disenchantment with his future performance, resentment of arbitrary decisions, failure to produce promised new inventory, etc. could cause the military to depose him (or he could resign). A change of this nature will lead to stability problems with attendant risk of insurgency.

C. Economic and Social. Social equality has not arrived in Ecuador. Men are not equal within any stratum of

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the society. The racial factor is ever present, but submerged with the poorer lot suffered by campesinos of Indian blood. Most persons of white Spanish blood (predominantly and visably mixed, with few exceptions) have strong prejudices against the indios. These, in turn, distrust the "whites". All look down on the black negro. The racial problem is negligible if measured by the number and intensity of direct confrontations. However, the caste system operates in matters of education (most indians never receive more than six years of primary school), of employment, and of government. Regional differences, regardless of race, are noticeable -- the people of the sierra dislike and distrust the people of the coast and vice versa. Even provincial and urban countryside prejudices exist. Threaded through all is the divisive cult of "maleness" (machismo) which is the egocentric philosophy of the big "I". No man can accept and improve on the actions and plans of his predecessor. All must uproot what has gone on before and must begin anew with his own solution. While progress may result from this process, in most cases the continuity for long-range action is destroyed. "Machismo" has specific connotations in private life also, but these are generally not so corrosive to national progress. The economic stratification is not so noticeable as the social and one can more easily move upward. At higher levels, social caste is predominant. Across-the-board economic concern is especially prevalent at this time due to recent financial and economic decrees. Since the currency is involved, all persons are apprehensive. This can be solved by the central government but inept handling can cause grave repercussions and give additional impetus to insurgency. Extreme economic pressure against the oligarchies and autonomous agencies could induce them to foment and financially support low levels of insurgency to discredit the national government. Social injustices can contribute and, with the return of a stable or growing economy, may become overriding in engendering insurgency. The young (16-30 year olds) are most likely to revolt against the Establishment with students being prime candidates for guerrilla action.

D. Ideological. A strong nationalistic feeling is instilled during early years, through slogans, accent on

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historical figures and accomplishments, military history, mandatory participation in singing the National Anthem, frequent occasions for public swearing of allegiance to the flag, and other devices. How much is nationalism directed against Peru and how much is true patriotism directed toward betterment of Ecuador cannot be assessed. Vast majority of people are hard-working, alert, oriented on the non-Communist world, ambitious and generally pro-U.S. Most profess a religious affiliation (Roman Catholic) and almost all have adjustable business ethics which permit them to take full advantage of a favorable position.

E. Personal Motivation. Desire to succeed is a universal trait (see para. I-C above). Ecuadoreans suffer from a national inferiority complex as to their own products, culture, worth (all unfounded, in opinion of writer). Many see no future here and prefer emigration, principally to the U.S. Rather than face up to the difficult task of nation-building, some would rather avoid national responsibilities. Unfortunately, this attitude leaves the initiative to the zealous revolutionary who can achieve and expand in his activities without the inhibiting effects of the motivated patriot who fights for his country's institutions. Of course, there are individuals in all walks of life who defend their heritage and serve to defeat those who would destroy the country. These at times are ultra-rightists who also abrade the democratic fabric and give rise to insurgency conditions.

II. (CNFD) THE INSURGENT THREAT. Ecuador has no active insurgency. A few insurgent efforts have occurred since 1962, all weak and completely ineffective. The lack of guerrilla success to date has been due to the unfavorable rural political climate, the small size and fragmentation of insurgent elements, and the alertness of the military leadership. The insurgent threat is expected to remain weak unless major foreign support is provided. There are indications of continuing Cuban and Chinese assistance to potential Ecuadorean insurgents, but the aid is unlikely to overcome the internal obstacles against guerrilla operations. There are six Communist oriented parties in Ecuador, with an estimated membership of 2,000 and about 5,000 sympathizers, as well as a

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large number of independent Communists not associated with any one group. The largest and best organized, the Communist Party of Ecuador (PCE), has a membership of about 300 plus about 2,000 supporters. The Communist movement and the extreme left are seriously hindered by acute factionalism and by the poor quality and personal ambition of the leaders. The Communist groups are poorly financed and have received little effective support from Communist parties of other countries. The military-junta government of 1963-1966, which came to power partly because of concern among military leaders over growing ultra-leftist influence within the government, immediately arrested many Communists and other extremists and effectively checked the Communist, but the succeeding civilian government released most Communists and extreme leftists from prison and allowed others to return from exile. The Ecuadorean Constitution of 1967 (now abolished) afforded the Communist parties (and all other parties) the freedom to conduct their affairs openly, and they have become active politically, although they remain weak. Their total voting strength is estimated at 20,000, the number of votes received in 1968 by the Presidential candidate of the electoral front of the Communist Party of Ecuador. The Communists have the capability for momentary exploitation of any chaotic condition such as the student disturbances of when they seized urban governments in Loja and Cuenca in March 1966, but in that instance they were ousted within a few hours by the local population. The presence of the new Russian Embassy in Quito initially, at least, will dictate that activities and physical contacts between USSR diplomatic and PCE personnel be conducted circumspectly. Recent student demonstrations and confrontations have called up a sharp, ultra-rightist reaction. The Armed Forces have served notice of a hard-line approach and President Velasco has dissolved the FESE (Federation of Ecuadorean Secondary Students), affiliated with a Communist-led university organization. Recent arrests of radicals have driven the hard-core Communists underground. The extent of their ability to form, equip and train guerilla units depends directly on the economic and social situation of the country. The Armed Forces remain the most effective force to control spread of Communist-inspired insurgency.

III. (CNFD) LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNTERINSURGENCY CAPABILITIES.

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A. International. Ecuador enjoys favorable international relations, to include the arrival in January of advance elements of the Russian Embassy (now fully operational). She has accepted the USSR presence as an expression of Ecuadorean sovereignty and to enhance trade with Iron Curtain countries. Ecuador lacks an efficient counter-intelligence service and is vulnerable to penetration. This creates a potential source of trouble if Communist-inspired insurgency develops. An information exchange service for data on international movements of known subversives is functioning between most Latin American countries. Ecuador participates in this service.

B. Forces. The public forces can cope with localized guerrilla activities, but could not control effectively widespread insurgency.

1. Army. The paratroop battalion in Quito is trained in counter-insurgency and can react swiftly by road or by air to localized threats. All Army units garrisoned nation-wide have a counter-insurgency capability which varies greatly by unit and time of year. All have short-time conscripts and state of training at any given time will fluctuate. The Army contains four jungle detachments, each of 40-50 men (known as Tigers). These are specially trained in jungle operations and counter-insurgency operations and usually contain personnel knowledgeable in the area of possible employment. They are well equipped, have good moral, are well led and active. Vast areas and relatively small forces limit their effectiveness for patrolling the remote areas on a regular basis. Units are located at Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo de los Colorados, Quevedo, and recently, at Sta. Cecilia in the Oriente oil-field area.

2. Air Force. The Air Force has a low capacity against insurgency due to chronic shortage of funds and problems of organization and personnel. It can support localized action by ground forces and provide aerial drop for paratroopers and cargo. One squadron at Taura is earmarked for C-I operations. The Air Search and Rescue Squadron

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(H-19 helicopters) at Guayaquile is restricted due to short operational range of the aircraft. Dense foliage hampers visual and photographic reconnaissance as does the seasonal low cloud cover and reduced visibility. Joint Army/Air Force training is accomplished as funds permit.

3. Navy. The Navy has a very restricted capability to detect or control infiltration by sea. Some coastal surveillance, intercept, counter-insurgency and sea lift operations can be conducted with one ARD and two LSM's utilizing the only Marine Battalion (200 men) or selected Army units. The 450-mile coastline and innumerable rivers and estuaries cannot be adequately controlled by the very small number of ships and craft. These are old and slow. A slight improvement will occur when three new patrol craft arrive from Germany. (The first is to arrive about year's end). Shortage of operating funds curtails counter-insurgency routine patrols as well as counter-smuggler operations.

4. Police. Although now at 5,500 or more in personnel strength, the National Police organization lacks ability to control major civil disorders. At low levels of engagement, they perform well but need military back-up at medium or higher levels. Recent funds have been provided for control items (tear gas, shields, shot-guns and high pressure water vehicles) and effectiveness has increased. The Rural police organization is spread so thin that it is quite useless except for intelligence gathering functions and warning of guerrilla attacks. Ability to reinforce isolated outposts is negligible.

C. Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence. One principal military organization is the Directorate General de Informaciones (DGI) a combined agency which includes representation of Army, Navy, Air Force, National Police and Customs Police. The DGI is under direction of the National Security Council (NSC) which is responsive to and reports to the President. This organization has been moderately effective in surveilling subversives and revolutionaries. The Director of DGI is also commandant of the National Intelligence School and traditionally is drawn

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from Army sources in grade of Colonel or Lieutenant Colonel. The DGI lacks an effective counter-intelligence capability and is practically defenseless against penetration by deep cover personnel or sophisticated electronic device. The Directorate General of Security (DGS) is another organization which has access to the President. It, however, is a separate civilian organization responsive to the Minister of Government. It is a rather shoddy unit, understrength, poorly paid, lacking in funds, leadership, direction and sincerely motivated personnel. DGS is rife with politics and cannot be considered effective in either intelligence or C-I activities. Each service maintains a small intelligence staff to battalion or equivalent level. While essentially oriented on military intelligence matters, a goodly amount of effort is spent on counter-insurgency. A similar situation exists within the National Police framework, with accent, of course, on the criminal investigation field. The Army also operates an Intelligence Detachment with field offices in principal cities and resident offices in rural areas. Customs police also operate an intelligence net with paid informers. All of the foregoing, with exception of the DGS, contribute to the DGI which is generally the focal point for national intelligence of all kinds, including counter-insurgency information. Overall, the intelligence community is considered moderately effective in supplying C-I needs and has adequate communications capability.

D. Civil Action and Its Effectiveness. All services conduct civic action programs aided by advice and assistance of the USMILGP. Army does construction on bridges, roads, schools, etc. Navy makes routine visits to remote coastal settlements and furnishes medical and dental service. The Air Force serves remote interior areas, to include the jungle, with help similar to the Navy's. These programs are extremely helpful in restoring or improving the image of the Armed Forces in remote areas but lacks impact in urban areas, although some civic action, such as operation of water tank trucks during periods of water shortage, is done in major cities. A reservoir of good will has been created in some areas but other remote locations could sustain insurgents without the knowledge of the central government.

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## IV. (CNFD) U.S. ROLE IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

A. Country Team. The country team concept was modified by the present Ambassador on his arrival early April. A small group of key Embassy staff officers (DCM, POL, CAS, AID, ECON, USIS, COMILGP, DATT) meet with the Ambassador each Tuesday to receive guidance and report on significant developments. Meetings are short and informative in nature. Embassy direction and policy making is concentrated in hands of the Ambassador, as it should be. The DCM has an open-door policy and is available for presentation of problems and suggestions by the staff. Because there is no active insurgency in Ecuador, the country team, per se, plays no C-I role vis-a-vis the GOE.

B. U. S. Military Forces. The DATT is involved with military at only top levels (Armed Forces General Staff and Army, Navy and Air Force) with few exceptions due to limitations imposed by having only one attaché. The DATT observes C-I training at unit levels when on field trips as a collateral function. The USMILGP on other hand is better disposed and takes part in advice, assistance and observation of C-I training and organization in all of the Armed Forces. A principal MILGP role concerns the MAP and its planning and application. Recent reductions in the MAP, cut-back in MILGP personnel and USG failure to produce concrete military aid in replacement tanks, ships and aircraft (to include associated spares) is adversely affecting the operations of both DATT and MILGP. The lack of response is forcing GOE to go the third country route.

C. United States Information Service. USIS maintains a concerted campaign to improve the U.S. image. In addition to an effective cultural program, the joint staffing and operation of Binational Centers, and an active student exchange program, a worthwhile activity, concerns distribution of books, pamphlets and other literature. Strong rapport with most news media gives an entrée for many publicity releases, motion picture trailers, and attributed and non-attributed public opinion material. In DATT's opinion, USIS is an effective force in Ecuador.

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D. Agency for International Development. The AID agency is involved at medium and high levels of financial support. Its effectiveness is difficult to judge as its operations, while impacting on the grass roots of society, lose much of their identity due to GOE filtration. Some operations, such as malaria control, are well-received. Others, e.g., family planning or birth control, do not appear to be as popular. The primary purpose of AID seems to be to shore up the sagging economy where required, but their procedures do not provide timely remedies.

E. Other U.S. Activities. The opinion of the DATT as concerns the Peace Corps program for Ecuador is definitely biased and little long-term gain can be noted. A few PC Volunteers are outstanding, but the majority are mediocre, self-oriented, misfits who cause more problems than they solve. The American Consulate General in Guayaquil, as well as the Consulate in Quito, is doing an impressive job to engender understanding and identification with U.S. ideals for their civilian contacts. Each is limited by severe restrictions on visa quotas. Both, however, have principal contacts with the middle- and upper-class segments of society. Aside from pulse-taking and other observations, little interchange is had with the potentially dissident elements. The U.S. Government offices do their best to guide and influence but effectiveness varies with target groups. One sore point is the 200-mile sea limit over which Ecuador more or less exercises its sovereignty.

V. (CNFD) THIRD COUNTRY SUPPORT TO ECUADOR. Training is offered to Ecuadorean Armed Forces by Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Spain and Venezuela. Some specialized training in conjunction with patrol boat and aircraft purchases is provided by Germany and the U.K., respectively. With decrease in U.S. equipment support and cutback in military aid, more third country purchases with attendant training will be the trend. Brazil also provides support through the joint Via-Interoceana project, which is planning roads and waterways for commercial traffic between Ecuadorean and Brazilian ports. The Israeli's furnish technical advice and possibly financial assistance for a rural rehabilitation program in conjunction with the Ecuadorean Army. This latter program is considered effective.

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VI. (CNFD) AREAS IN NEED OF INCREASED EMPHASIS. The rural police program needs to be increased, reorganized and given new direction in order to develop the usefulness, mutual esteem and effectiveness required to defeat incipient rural insurgency. This re-alignment is especially required for the urban echelons of the National Police structure. An increase in Armed Forces capability for counter-insurgency operations is also indicated. (In this regard, there is talk of a new 400-man marine battalion and perhaps a doubling of the paratroop strength.)

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